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NUGGET
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No. 134.

STREET & SMITH, Publishers.

NEW YORK.

31 Rose St., N. Y. P. O. Box 2734.

5 Cents.

TOM EDISON JR'S ELECTRIC SEA SPIDER



OR,
The Wizard of the Submarine World

By PHILIP READE.

CHAPTER I.

ADrift UPON THE TROPICAL SEA.

"Walters!"

"Yes, sir."

"The day has come. Your eyes are better than mine. Look around the sea and ascertain whether there is any sail in sight."

An old Jack Tar rears himself in the

SUDDENLY A TRAP FLIES OPEN, AND SEVERAL FIGURES, ARMED WITH STRANGE GUNS, LEAP INTO VIEW.

bow of the weather-beaten boat, and holding on to the rude mast, surveys the dreary waste of sea that stretches around. He bears the impress of famine's hand. It shows in his gaunt face and sunken eyes, in the trembling hand that was until lately so powerful of grip.

Eagerly this sailor shades his eyes with one hand, while he searches the horizon for the long hoped-for sail. Then, with a deep groan, he turns his head in the direction of his sole companion, a smooth-faced youth half-reclining in the stern sheets, who has watched the actions of the lookout with keen anxiety.

"Useless, useless," he mutters.

"You can see no ship, Walters. We must enter upon another burning day, with this tropical sea around us. A day that may be our last, for I am afraid I cannot endure another twelve hours of it."

The voice is not a complaining one, but there seems to be something uncommon about it. A glance shows the speaker to be handsome, though far from sturdy.

"Nary a sail, Master George, I'm sorry to say. Let me arrange the canvas so it'll give ye some shelter from the sun. Blast my eyes, what was that there over yonder?" pointing.

"I see it now, and should say it was a whale asleep on the surface of the sea. Now, it has gone again. Am I right, Walters?"

"On my part, sir, I'm inclined to think the thing must be one of them monster basking sharks, perhaps forty feet long, that can be found in warm countries."

"Then I hope the fellow may not awaken, though—with a sigh—it would only be hastening the inevitable end—since hope has about gone out of our hearts. Look yonder, Walters, and you will read our doom in that sky."

The old sailor nods his head moodily as he surveys the black clouds gathering in the heavens at a certain point, knowing but too well what such a thing portends in this latitude.

"You are right, Master George. It will be the dreaded typhoon, and our troubles must soon be over. But look, the strange sleeping monster has approached nearer, although I can as yet discover no motion, 'cept that caused by the waves."

The young fellow, reclining in the stern, has curiosity enough to stagger to his feet, and survey the object that thus excites the interest of his fellow-voyager in the long boat.

"What you say is true, Walters. It seems to be propelled by some hidden power. Look closer and tell me if you cannot see a lazy sort of movement near the water, as though the creature has fins or legs on either side."

"Ginger, you are right, sir. That is no whale or basking shark. The closer it comes the more I am of the opinion it is some species of immense sea turtle."

"In my mind it resembles a gigantic spider more than anything else. A turtle might float upon the water half-submerged, but you never saw one wholly upon the surface, or even walking upon the water, as this mysterious creature seems to be doing. I am really amazed. All the while it draws closer to us."

"At any rate, we'll soon learn the truth. It's a question in my mind whether the gale ends our case, or this terrible sea monster opens his maw to take us in. So far as I'm concerned it doesn't matter much. Luke Walters has seen a good deal of life, and might as well cry quits right here; but it pains me when I think of you, Master George, so young and handsome, meeting such a cruel fate."

The old sailor is deeply moved, and it is evident he thinks much of his young comrade.

"I am not worrying so much over that, my good friend, as the unfinished mission that brought me to these tropical seas," returns the pale-faced young fellow, sadly.

"Look at the storm clouds rising. How fast they rear themselves. I'm afraid our last hour's at hand, my lad."

"At any rate, Walters, we'll meet our fate with the bravery of true Americans. You and I have faced death before. How long before the storm will reach us, do you think?"

The old sailor looks to windward with the manner of one accustomed to gauging such things, and then announces:

"In fifteen minutes, sir, this boat will not be seen on the surface of the sea."

"So soon as that? But what does it matter? We must die some time, and a little sooner or later makes no difference. Walters, I beg of you to make your peace with heaven."

Several minutes pass, and the far-away mutter of the storm is borne to them upon the fitful breeze. The heavens have become as black as ink in that quarter, and it is certain that one of the dreaded cyclones of the water, a hurricane is rushing in their direction.

Almost half of the sailors' limit has expired when another sound comes to them—the lapping of water upon some object close by.

Walters looks over the gunwale, and utters a loud exclamation that betrays both astonishment and alarm. Close to their quarter looms up the strange object that attracted their attention a short time back—the spider leviathan of the deep. A most startling object it is, indeed, and even Master George opens his eyes in amazement as he surveys its mail clad back, and wonderful sturdy legs that support it upon the water. He looks more closely than the old sailor and of necessity sees more.

"We're lost!" cries Walters, clutching the poor apology of a mast in his despair.

"Say rather we are saved," shouts George, snatching his cap from his curly locks and waving it enthusiastically above his head.

CHAPTER II.

THE STRANGE BOAT THAT WALKED UPON THE WATERS.

Walters looks at his young master in a peculiar way, for, truth to tell, he fears that the accumulation of disasters has unsettled the reason of his fellow-castaway.

"You wonder what I mean, my good man. Take the oars and bring us alongside this strange marine monster. Quick, or he will slip by us," cries the young fellow, passing to the bow.

The old sailor has learned to obey, and at once seizes the oars. At the same time he says:

"What would you do, Master George?"

"Board this monster sea spider," answers the other, his fine face kindled with animation.

"Clean daft, as I suspected," mutters Walters, as he sets to work with the oars; "poor lad, but what difference can it make, anyhow. Might as well make a meal for this monster as go down in the gale. Here we are, sir."

The boat strikes against the huge shell of the great monster with quite a blow, but there is no perceptible result, save the shock given to the inmates of the small craft. Master George, painter in hand, scrambles up the sloping back of the water giant, nimble as a goat.

Walters looks to see him suddenly seized by some fearful tentacles and a frightful mouth open to engulf him, but no such dreaded event occurs.

On the contrary, Master George reaches what appears to be the apex of the sloping back, and beckons his companion to follow.

Seeing that he is in for it the sailor obeys, and as he, too, is agile, though weakened by exposure and starvation, in the course of a minute he has managed to gain place beside his comrade.

By this time his wonder has increased tenfold, as shown by his face, for in climbing to his present perch he has made a tremendous discovery, and learned a fact that explains the strange cry of Master George:

"We are saved!"

The other reads it on his face, and laughs in a sort of hysterical manner, brought about by his own revulsion of feeling.

"Walters, the hurricane will be here in about seven minutes, but we're not going to go down before it, I reckon. You have discovered the secret of this wonderful object, I see."

"It is no living spider of the sea, but an ingenious ship made by some man ahead of the times. I discovered the metal as I clambered up by the footholds on the side—aluminum, sir."

"Exactly, as you say. We can only hope the owner of this novel craft will prove friendly and allow us to enter before the hurricane comes."

"She's roaring over yonder now, sir."

"Which warns us that time flies. We must in some way signal to those within, so that they may rescue us. If this is as I suspect, a submarine craft, capable of descending into the sea, we may suddenly be left floating here. Quick, strike hard upon the metal—pound for your life man."

Walters already has a heavy piece of iron in his hand, which is fastened to the end of the painter. With this he strikes the surface of the huge metal sea spider, and a ringing sound ensues. Plainly as it strikes their ears, it must be of a deafening nature to those within the shell.

Again and again he repeats the blow, until a regular tattoo is beaten, sufficient to arouse the dead. It has the desired effect. A sudden upheaval is seen, and a metal trap near by flies open, allowing the figure of a man holding a strange gun in his hand to leap into view. Several others follow, all similarly armed.

Walters gasps in astonishment, but at the same time experiences a feeling of relief when he notes that the sailors are bright-looking young Yankees, instead of dark-faced Spaniards or Moors. They have suffered so much since being cast away, and longed so heartily to see the face of a fellow-human, that it seems to him they must be saved.

The man who first meets them is elongated in frame, with carrotty hair.

"Well, I swaw, who under the sun are you, and where did ye come from?" sweeping the surrounding ocean with his eyes and taking note of the approaching hurricane.

"Our vessel, the Wanderer, was burned while a storm raged. I do not know what became of the rest, but we have suffered terribly. When death seemed to hover over us," pointing to the stormy heavens, "a merciful Providence sent you across our path. Unless I am mistaken, the inmates of this strange craft are Americans, and will not refuse to save fellow-Yankees."

His winning manner would melt a heart of stone, and the tall man nods emphatically, as he holds out his bony hand.

"Right you are, sir. Captain Tom would never let a fellow-human die, though his mission to these seas is to destroy. As an American I welcome ye both on board the Sea Spider. Judging from the way yonder hurricane rushes in this direction, we would be wise to go below."

A voice bellows up through the open hatch:

"Mynhew Liston, de capting wants you right away. He says de barometer descends to von ferry low plane. We had petter as qwick go down to de pottom of de sea."

"That's our second mate, Donnerblitz. You'll like him, comrades. Follow me!"

This they do gladly, casting adrift their boat, which has one noble service thus far in saving them from a watery grave, but which must in short order perish in the hurricane.

Through the trap they pass, just as the first shrill burst of wind sweeps along, and a great white wave of foam is seen a mile or two away, curling aloft in a fearful manner.

Clang goes the trap shut. Liston, whom they believe to be the first mate of this singular craft, presses an electric button near by. They feel a sudden throb as of mighty engines beginning to work. Then comes a roaring sound like the rushing of water into a great cavity, after which there is a strange feeling such as comes upon one in the ticket of a coal mine when descending a shaft thousands of feet in depth.

They are sinking into the bowels of the ocean, and the tropical hurricane is cheated of its prey.

CHAPTER III.

CAPTAIN TOM.

A few minutes later the two forlorn castaways are ushered into the presence of the commander of this submarine craft. To their surprise they find him a young

man not more than twenty years of age at the outside and, perhaps, even younger than his looks might indicate, for Tom Edison, Jr., like his renowned father possesses a head much after the model of a Napoleon.

Although surprised, the young captain receives the castaways with a friendly spirit. He has too much business on his hands just now to hear their story, and besides sympathizes with their destitute condition. Hence he orders Liston to attend to all their wants, and promises to see them later when they have rested and feasted.

Again he bends over his charts, an occupation in which he was disturbed by their entrance, and an unusually thoughtful expression can be seen upon his face.

No one seems to note the eager manner in which young Master George has surveyed the captain from the moment he heard his name. Perhaps there is some reason for this unusual interest—time will tell the story.

The castaways are led into another chamber, and seated at a table. Here food of a very inviting nature is given to them in certain quantities, and they feel like themselves again.

"Better sleep a while," says the mate, and, indeed, they do feel their eyes grow heavy after partaking of such a heavy meal.

All is deathly quiet around them, save for the pulsation of some powerful engine that drives the singular craft along under the water in a manner as yet a mystery to them.

The air seems to grow heavy, and they sleep, how long they know not.

Hours pass by, and at length the younger of the two opens his eyes. He looks around him in wonder; and gradually the whole truth breaks upon him. Remembering the last words of Liston, the mate, he presses a button, and in a minute the angular Yankee stands before him.

Walters, too, awakens, and declares that strange, though it may seem, he is again hungry, whereat Liston laughs and announces that eighteen hours have passed since they last dined.

Again they sit down to an abundance of good cheer, after which the mate takes them around to explain the complicated machinery of this the latest and most ingenious invention brought out by Tom Edison, Jr.

To Walters it is all Greek, but his young companion seems to know enough about the science of electricity to know the principle involved, and what duty each wheel and crank and piston has to perform.

The long legs or feelers which sustain the body of the aluminum vessel upon the surface of a comparatively quiet sea, can propel her in any direction at the rate of sixty miles an hour. When Tom Edison, Jr., conceived this idea of progression, he copied nature, watching the water bugs and spiders traveling upon the still surface of coves and mill-ponds, until he fully mastered the principle of their wonderful movements. Adding to this the property of applying the same power underneath the water, he had an astonishing craft, capable of skimming the seas or of piercing their depths.

All known devices the bright young engineer has appropriated, and the result is truly a marvel, odd in appearance truly, but of a serviceable order.

Master George is delighted with all things, and does not hesitate to say as much. He asks questions and endeavors to explain to Walters, who cannot but feel uneasy when he learns they are at that very moment moving along more than eighty fathoms beneath the surface of the sea, nor can he force himself to believe it until given a peep through a bull's-eye of clear glass. A flood of electric light illumines the depths ahead, and all manner of queer submarine fishes can be seen eying the monster Sea Spider in alarm. Some of them are never seen at the surface, and Walters may well shudder as he gazes upon their truly diabolical shapes.

"You have seen all that Captain Tom ever shows visitors, young feller," says Liston, in his quaint way. "We are heavily armed, too, and could sink the largest man-of-war afloat, either with the dynamite gun to be fired from a port-hole on deck, or our submarine guns that propel torpedoes against the side of an enemy's ship. Kindly return with me to your room. Later, you will have a talk with the captain."

They have seen a number of the crew, and among them noted one who appears to be an officer, though he wears a suit of buckskin, and talks in the style of the Western border.

Together in their room they talk of the strange event that has befallen them. Walters is awe-struck by the wonders he has seen, while his companion appreciates them enough to sincerely admire the young genius whose mind has evolved such astonishing results.

They even speculate regarding the mission that has brought the Sea Spider to this far away sea, and while evolving odd fancies feel that they are doubtless adrift from the truth. It will be better to let the immediate future look out for itself. At the same time both of them feel that singular things are in store for them.

A short time later they are summoned into the presence of the young inventor, whose fame in connection with air-ships has already been sounded around the whole world. They find him in his little den, and from the peculiar models around it is evident that he pursues his studies even while sounding the depths of the grand old ocean.

Awe-struck, Walters hangs back, but his young companion advances to grasp the outstretched hand which the inventor offers.

Eye looks into eye, and these two feel that there is a body of sympathy between them that must draw them closer together the longer they remain in company. It is a strange feeling, and yet quite natural that two young men of the same character should be thus drawn together. The hand pressure is cordial on both sides.

CHAPTER IV.

THE YELLOW SERPENT.

The story of the castaways is soon told, and they receive the sympathy of the young commander. As yet he has said nothing about himself and his mission, though smiling at the plain curiosity visible upon their faces.

"You would like to learn something about me. There is no reason I should not take you into my confidence, since we may be fellow-voyagers in the Sea Spider for some time to come."

Tom Edison, Jr., thereupon spins his yarn in a way that is brief and to the point. His principal mission to these tropical seas is the punishment of the daring Chinese pirates who infest them and the rescue of a ship's crew of Americans believed to be held in captivity among them.

The Chinese are advancing rapidly in the arts of warfare, and it will not be long ere they take a leading part in such matters. It is not generally known that in several things they have even outdone our own proud America, and Captain Tom is to find this out to his cost.

A hint is dropped about a second duty that brings the Sea Spider to this region, but as the young inventor fails to enlarge upon it they are no wiser.

Master George has an idea in his mind, and he presently asks his old friend Walters to step out of the room so that he may talk in private with the captain. Of course, this excites the curiosity of the young inventor, who, however, quietly waits the other's pleasure.

"Captain, I have something strange to tell you. It may assist in your mission besides. At any rate, you shall hear my story previous to the burning of the Wanderer."

"The captain of that vessel, engaged in the opium business between Calcutta and Canton, picked me up from a small boat, and how I came there is the matter that interests us now."

"Many months ago I was captured by the very pirates whom you now hunt. They held me a prisoner for some time, and then their leader, a clever fellow, by name Kiang Ho of the Golden Belt, discovering that I was well up in electricity, saw a chance to utilize my knowledge."

"So he took me on board his boat, and I must confess, sir, I was amazed to discover such knowledge of the hidden powers among the Celestials. His craft is certainly as unique and wonderful as your own, and yet built on an entirely different model. This Celestial inventor has util-

ized the power by means of which a serpent propels its forward. His craft would, indeed, be taken for some monster of the deep, if seen by one who did not know its nature."

"Its hidden powers are, indeed, marvelous, although I confess you have the better of him in many ways. Since you are seeking him it might be well to utilize my knowledge of his craft, for he will prove no mean antagonist when you run across his course."

"This is, indeed, a pleasant piece of news, my dear fellow, and I thank you for your friendly feeling. Before you describe this piratical craft, allow me to call my officers in, for it is important that they should hear it all."

He touches a button several times, and in less than a minute the door of the little den opens and a man stands in. This is Liston, and behind him comes a rotund rufous-faced Dutchman, with a shrewd look upon his features. Donnerblitz, the second officer. Back of him strides Coonskin, while the chief engineer brings up the rear.

This little company almost fills the cabin, but they find places in which to stow themselves away, after which young Edison introduces each in turn to the guest, giving his story in brief, so that the others may know what to expect.

"Now, my good friend, let us hear a description of the wonderful serpent vessel against which sooner or later the guns of our gallant Sea Spider will be manned. We are all deeply interested in this game you may be sure, and will feel greatly pleased to hear your report."

This is invitation enough for Master George, who thereupon starts in and describes the Chinese submarine vessel in a manner that only an experienced electrician could master. They hang upon his words eagerly. So vivid does he paint the Yellow Serpent that they can in imagination see her, fully understand the motive power that drives her with swiftness on or under the sea, and besides know the weakness of her structure.

When the young narrator ceases they warmly thank him. Then a host of questions is showered upon him which he answers in a way that is eminently satisfactory to the others.

The conference is broken up. They believe they know where to locate the strange vessel of the Mongolian pirates, and young Edison gives immediate orders that the Sea Spider be headed for the islands, which have become a nest for the numerous piratical craft haunting the waters of the Yellow Sea, and the region to the south.

Several days pass comfortably, and the two shipwrecked comrades have nothing to complain of in their physical condition. Everything that can be carried on a voyage at their service, they live on the fat of the land, so to speak, and their recent privations are soon but a dim memory of the past.

Master George sees much of Tom Edison, Jr., and the two have become fast friends, exchanging views with regard to many appliances, although the young inventor is far ahead of his companion in all that pertains to trade. He comes of stock that has become famous the world over.

"Here is where we are just now," remarks the skipper one day, touching a point on a chart with his lead pen.

"What! then we are close to land, and the islands will be in sight with a glass," cries George.

"Come on deck with me, and we will see," and the powerful engines having ceased to throb, young Edison picks up a glass and leads the way to the little ladder leading down the trap.

CHAPTER V.

THE NIGHT MISSION.

They reach the flat top of the electric spider of the Sea Spider. A hand-rail surrounds a certain section now, so that the waves may not wash them off. With the glass the captain carries, a singularly powerful affair, they have no difficulty in seeing the group of islands dead ahead, where Tom Edison, Jr.'s interest lies.

Of course, they cannot make as thorough an obser-

on as would be possible from a more elevated point, but enough can be seen to give them good satisfaction.

It is the intention of the young captain to cruise in these waters until he runs across the strange masterpiece of machinery constructed by Kiang Ho of the Golden Belt, a celestial who gained considerable renown among American colleges before going back to China.

When the two electric submarine vessels at length come into collision, there will be blue lights and a great time generally, for each is provided with numerous startling modern inventions for savage warfare.

Meanwhile young Edison may find a chance to rescue the imprisoned sailors, providing they are still alive, and possibly an opportunity may come up whereby the Sea Spider can inflict considerable damage to the piratical fleet that haunts these waters.

The glass shows them numerous vessels in and about the adjacent harbor. Some are Chinese junks, strange craft, indeed, while others resemble European ships, that have been captured by the pirates.

"Look yonder, surely that is a modern man-o'-war, but what would she be doing here?"

Master George smiles, as he replies:

"That is the Ylang Ylang, a vessel the pirate captain had built on the Clyde, a powerful steel-clad ram. Besides, there is another Chilian man-o'-war which his men surprised and captured, a consort for the Esmeralda. You see the secret of this man's power—the Chinese authorities fear him."

Tom Edison, Jr., rubs his hands in glee.

"The more the merrier. We are built for fighting, and nothing could please me better than to have a whole navy to engage. We'll show 'em that Uncle Sam's boys haven't been asleep while all this rumpus is going on in the electrical world."

He wastes no more time, but descends to his cabin to make a final study of his charts. Master George has pronounced them inaccurate and corrected them in a way that gives Edison much pleasure.

While he thus studies the situation below, and lays his plans for business, the balance of the ship's company are busily employed in various ways. Although it seems peculiar, they are really getting the boat cleared for action.

Meanwhile Walters and his young companion stand upon the deck, and with the glass observe all that transpires around the islands. To George it is a peculiarly interesting sight, because he can remember only a short time ago when he was a despairing prisoner in this place. How time changes things! Now, he returns upon a powerful vessel, under the command of a determined young hero, who has sworn to wipe this piratical nest from the face of the earth.

The genial face of Donnerblitz appears in view, and his voice is heard asking them to descend, as the vessel is about to move closer to the islands, and must sink beneath the waves in order that the watchful lookout of ten pirates may not discover her presence with his glass.

Presently they are on the move again, slowly progressing toward the point which is of such deep interest to them. The captain would feel his way, so to speak, and a careful watch is kept all the while for signs of the Yellow Serpent.

Finally sounds the bell that causes the vessel to become stationary some thirty fathoms deep. The lookout has been constantly on duty, but he has seen only such denizens of the water as naturally belong to the bottom of the sea.

Slowly the weird craft rises to the surface until a fragment of her flattened belt is above the water. This is enough to allow the lookout a chance to use the glass and bull's-eye placed for such a purpose.

They find themselves within half a mile of the steel ram, which is anchored near the islands.

Smoke issuing from her funnels proclaims the fact that she has steam up. The lookout, perched upon the highest point of the islands, in sweeping the horizon for sails will hardly discover the strange object lying upon the water so near at hand. Nor for that matter does young Edison care a rap, since it is his intention to engage the entire navy of Kiang Ho without delay.

Everything is gotten in readiness for the stern business

soon to occur, but it is advisable that if any rescue of imprisoned sailors is to be carried out, it must be attempted first, for at the earliest moment after war is declared those in the power of the cruel Chinese will undoubtedly be put to death.

Again they sink to the bottom of the bay, and wait for time to pass and night to come.

When darkness covers land and sea the submarine vessel is brought to the surface, and as little swell can be found to interfere with their work, the curious legs carry her over the sea in the direction of the islands.

Lights are seen in many quarters, both on the vessels and coming from the shore. They reach a point as near the land as caution dictates, and then a boat is launched. Into this a dozen men pass, armed and ready for desperate business.

Then young Edison takes his place in the stern sheets with George beside him, for the latter's knowledge of the island where the prisoners are kept, and which now looms up before them, will be of incalculable benefit.

Reaching the shore without meeting any adventure, the boat is secreted and left in charge of one man, while the rest follow their leaders. The pirates have a regular town upon this island, and to rescue the prisoners the gallant little force which young Edison leads forward may have to face a small army of infuriated Mongolians, fierce fellows who know what desperate fighting is; but he has confidence in the justness of his cause, and relies considerably upon the ingenious weapons of war carried by his men.

CHAPTER VI.

"BOARDERS, AH-OY!"

The party finally reaches the outskirts of the town, and here meet with the first obstruction. It is in the form of a wall which has been raised here as a sort of protection from the land side. The Chinese have great faith in walls, as the wonderful one stretching hundreds of miles across their exposed border, to keep out the savage Tartars, proves.

A consultation is held, but young Edison has been warned of the existence of this same wall, and knows just how to force an entrance.

They move to the left, and presently a heavy gate is reached. It is massive in its construction, but the agents of destruction which they carry will soon cause it to topple over in ruins.

All is ready, and the small bomb in position. The party retires a certain distance, when their leader touches the wire connected with a small battery. Instantly there is heard a heavy roar, and the solid earth seems to tremble under their feet.

The massive gate lies in ruins, and without a cry the Yankee tars rush into the town. Of course, by this time the inhabitants are fully aroused, for the shock has been heard and felt over the entire island, though few guess its true import.

The greatest excitement reigns, and it really seems as though pandemonium has broken loose, such a jargon of sounds arise. Through it all the Yankee tars push, heading direct for the building where their friends are believed to be held in confinement.

Now and then a detachment of the pirates' venture to dispute their progress, but terror takes the place of bravery in their hearts when mysterious explosions occur in their midst, disabling many and killing not a few.

The sailors increase their speed as they draw near the calaboose, as though fearful lest the Chinese guards, cruel as sin, may put the prisoners to death when they learn that a rescue is in progress.

Now they sight the building. It is made like a fortress, and has a port-cullis that ordinary battering rams would make no impression on, but Tom Edison, Jr., is prepared for this, and with one effort of his giant power rends the heavy door from top to bottom.

As there is no longer an obstacle to their forward movement, an immediate advance is made. The guards come

rushing to meet them, but they are mowed down before the impetuous advance of the Americans.

The fortress is in their hands, and George leads them to where the prisoners are kept. Here they find the sailors, many of them in chains, and others enduring various tortures.

Quickly all are relieved, and then the little company is ready to begin the march back to the point where the boat has been left.

Of course time has elapsed, and the men of the town, learning the true nature of the affair, have gathered around to annihilate the daring foreigners who have thus braved their anger.

There is fully half a thousand packed around the calaboose at the time the Americans seek to leave it with the rescued prisoners. Lights flash in every direction, and as soon as the Yankee tars show themselves a mighty shout goes up that almost reaches the clouds.

Some of the invaders are appalled when they see that mob and hear the fearful clamor, but there is one stout heart among them that knows no fear. Their captain gives his orders as calmly as though inside his wonderful boat.

Already has the calaboose been fired, and the sight of the flames sets the populace mad. They act as though only too ready and willing to tear the foreigners to pieces if only able to lay hands upon them, which opportunity is, of course, beyond their reach.

"Forward!" comes the order, and these tars know what it means.

They would rush into the jaws of death, if the captain they love so well gives the command.

With a cheer they make an assault upon the compact mass. Although numerically weak they have many things in their favor. The mob is without order or a recognized head, and besides, seems hardly able to guess what they should do.

In a moment a hurricane bursts upon the scene, and the tumult is simply frightful. Gaping holes appear in the masses of human beings as bombs are discharged, and the strange guns carried by the sailors of the Sea Spider mow down enemies every time they are aimed, though no noise follows.

Such a scene beggars description. It cannot be called a battle, for the pirates early become completely demoralized and offer no resistance. Their most earnest desire seems to be in the line of escape, and here their great numbers hinder rather than assist them.

Of course, it is no part of the American's plan to do more deadly execution than he can help, but they must have a clear field for leaving the fortified city of the Mongolian pirates, hence the bombardment never slackens until they have passed the ramparts, and the mob seems to have utterly vanished.

Besides, the forlorn condition of the half-dead prisoners whom they have rescued, appeals to the hearts of the sailors, and all of them are bent upon avenging the wrongs of these men.

When the broken port-cullis is reached they pass out of the town, having lost but one man, and with three wounded. There is now a clear field to the boat, and they make the latter in safety.

The rescued sailors are first of all taken on board the Sea Spider, while Tom and his men wait to meet any attack that may be ushered in. It seems, however, that the pirates are all in a fog, and hardly know which way to turn in order to lay hold of their daring foes.

The vessels in the harbor are exchanging signal lights, as though they believe a Yankee man-of-war must be near by, from which the blue-jackets have been landed. Some of these lights are moving, which proves that the steel-clad ram has steam up and is ready for action.

Tom Edison, Jr., chuckles as he assists his young friend up along the sloping mail-clad deck of the Sea Spider, and assures him that ere another sun sinks to rest behind the Chinese coast, he will see maneuvers to astonish him.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SEA SPIDER IN ACTION.

The men are made as comfortable as the limited quarters of the submarine vessel will allow. Better still, they are given food that reminds them of olden days, and makes the blood flow faster in their veins. All are loud in their praises of the young skipper, who has rescued them from the clutches of the cruel Kiang Ho. They do not understand the nature of the odd boat to which their rescuers have brought them, but it is quite enough to know that they are once more under the dear old flag.

Thus the night passes. A close watch is kept for several boats are patrolling the harbor. Two of them have search lights, and throw the electric flash hither and yon in the endeavor to find the hostile ship from which these dashing Yankee tars came.

They do not notice the almost flat object upon the bosom of the sea, which rises and falls with each swell. Twice during the night, as one of the enemy's vessels heads directly toward the Sea Spider, the latter craft is allowed to sink a certain distance and remain down for some time.

At length morning comes. All are early astir on board the Yankee invention, since this day is to inaugurate the maiden battle of the new vessel, and they are anxious to know how she will work, for many of her points are really mysteries to all on board but the young inventor.

Breakfast is dispatched, and Tom Edison, Jr., turns to his young companion.

"Mark the time, my friend," he says, smiling.

"A quarter to eight," replies George.

"And at eight exactly we will fire our first gun that will open the battle."

With that he makes a signal and presently the vessel rises to the surface. The sea is comparatively quiet, and the strange Sea Spider will be able to make use of her wonderful legs in traveling over its surface.

The steel-clad ram is discovered a mile away at anchor while the other man-of-war, a counterpart of the Chilean vessel Esmeralda, can be discerned near the town.

"Keep your eyes on her, Master George, and you will see some excitement," remarks the captain.

A port hole has been opened, and the muzzle of a gun peeps into view. Captain Tom himself goes to sight and fire the first shot, as it is an honor he will hand over to no one.

Already George, using the glass, can see signs of great excitement aboard the ram.

Her crew line the side and hang from every place of observation, eagerly scanning the wonderful sea monster that advances toward them with such swift motion.

While Master George looks, he hears a clock inside the vessel strike eight. Before half of the strokes have sounded there comes a slight shock, and he knows the pneumatic gun has belched out a dynamite shell.

The glass is at his eye, and he easily marks the progress of the shell which explodes in the water a little short of the steel ram. Excitement reigns high upon the Ylang Ylang. The crew are beat to quarters and presently the heavy boom of a gun is heard, while a cloud of smoke ascends.

The ball sends a fountain up just to one side of the submarine boat. Others follow it as the ram gets into working order, and one strikes the shell of the Sea Spider only to glance off and ricochet over the water.

Again the dynamite gun of the Yankee craft sends her compliments in the direction of the ram, and although the latter is moving now, Tom Edison, Jr., has caught her range. This time the shell strikes a mast, which is used for holding a body of sharpshooter marines in a bullet-proof cage.

The whole business is sent into kindling wood, and several men meet death at the same time, for the explosive force of dynamite is downward, in exactly opposite range to that of powder, which elevates.

Now, the sea battle is on, and the consort of the steel ram bears down to join in the game. The Mongolian pirates are doubtless amazed at the peculiar shape of their antagonist, but not in as great a ratio as might be supposed, since familiarity with the ingenious inventions of Kiang Ho has given them an insight into such monsters of the deep.

They begin to circle around and keep up a constant bombardment. When the iron spheres strike the mailed deck of the Sea Spider it is always in an oblique direction, and there is no visible effect.

Already two junks that have endeavored to bear down upon the Yankee boat have been struck by shells and are sinking. The others upon seeing this, hasten to a safer distance, and leave the field of operations to the iron-clads.

When the ram finds how useless are her guns against this remarkable craft, she tries another dodge, and comes forward at full speed to run the Sea Spider down.

The Yankee could wait and send her to the bottom with a dynamite shell at close quarters, but he prefers to play with his prey, just as a cat would with a mouse before devouring it. Besides, as this is the first engagement of the submarine boat, he desires to try her thoroughly.

Those on the ram expect to accomplish their purpose, as they are now quite near, and the vessel is advancing at the rate of twenty miles an hour.

Suddenly, to their surprise, the odd craft has vanished, sinking into the depths of the sea before their startled eyes.

Of course, they are unable to follow, and move about in an uncertain manner waiting for the other boat to again make its appearance. This it does in another quarter, between the two men-of-war. The iron clad opens on it with a broadside, harmless to the object of its wrath, but inflicting some damage on board its consort, in direct range with the firing. Then the ram makes another furious rush at the enemy.

"This time we will wait for her," says the young captain, with a grim determination.

The ram plows up the water as she comes on, and looks like a very ugly customer, but the hand of Tom Edison, Jr., hardly trembles as it moves the latch that sights the gun, and prepares to finish the work of a million dollar war vessel. Now the Chinese ram comes within range at three hundred yards distance—it is time.

CHAPTER VIII.

A ROAR OF BATTLE.

The sight that followed was such as will be frequently seen in the next great war, when the nations of the world let loose the dogs that have so long been held in chains.

As the dynamite shell strikes the steel-clad ram square in the bow, there is heard a fearful explosion, and the Chinese vessel staggers in her onward career. She no longer obeys her helm, since the whole of her bow has been shattered, and it is evident that the Ylang Ylang must soon sink.

Intense excitement reigns on board; and scores of sailors are seen leaping into the sea, preferring to take their chances thus rather than remain on the doomed ram, which when she sinks will go down like a stone.

Her machinery appears to have been injured by the shock, for although she rushes forward with a great sweep of water, it is in a circular way, just as though some fatality has thrown her into the coils of a whirlpool.

Nothing more need be feared in this quarter, it is evident, and the Yankee skipper turns his attention in the direction of her consort.

Those on board the iron-clad have witnessed all this with astonishment and alarm. They can do the Sea Spider no harm with their guns, and it is very probable that their return must come now that the Yankees are free to look after them.

It does not surprise Tom Edison in the least, therefore, when he starts toward the great iron-clad, to see her steam going. She is a fleet vessel of her kind, and those on board hope to escape by showing a clean pair of heels; but they

do not know the resources of the weird craft against which they have been bucking.

"After them," says the skipper, and presently the Yankee vessel is speeding along, rapidly overtaking the piratical craft. Indeed, the Sea Spider can go three leagues to one on the part of the boat she pursues, such is the wonderful construction that enables her to glide over the sea, instead of passing through it.

Finding how rapidly they are being overhauled the terrified sailors on the iron-clad change the course of the vessel. Their aim is to beach her so that they may save their precious lives.

This action arouses the skipper's indignation. He can admire bravery, but such cowardice meets with severe condemnation at his hands.

"Settle her, Howler," he calls to the old boatswain, who also serves as chief gunner.

"Ay, ay, sir, with extreme pleasure," responds that worthy, giving the signal for a cessation of the forward motion, as it would be impossible to fire while the boat wabbles so tremendously.

As soon as she is comparatively quiet he sights the terrible dynamite gun, one of Tom's own invention, and nothing like the fifty foot affairs being tested by the Yankee government for coast defense.

"My compliments," shouts Howler.

Then comes the slight shock that tells of the gun being discharged. All who can look eagerly to ascertain the result. It happens that at the moment the iron-clad is broadside to them, as her pilots endeavor to reach a sandy stretch of beach. Thus a splendid mark is offered to the gunner, and one he has speedily availed himself of.

The shell strikes fair and square amidships, and the explosion is tremendous. It can be seen that the iron-clad is almost rent in twain by the frightful force of the shell, and her sinking is only a question of a few minutes.

Having accomplished his work, the skipper of the Sea Spider fires no more at the sinking ship. The sailors dot the water on all sides, some going down, while others strike for the shore.

Presently there is a lurch and down goes the Chinese gun-boat. Her masts protrude from the water, which is not more than thirty feet deep at this point, and scores of terrified sailors cling to them for support.

Tom Edison, Jr., has need to congratulate himself and his friends on the admirable manner in which his electric submarine vessel has acted during this, her maiden engagement.

He is satisfied with destroying the navy of the powerful Kiang Ho, and still the pirate's nest should be more fully broken up before the Yankees quit.

Orders are given, and the Sea Spider takes up a position exactly in front of the town. Here shore batteries open upon them, hoping to do some damage because they are more elevated, but when by good luck the gunners manage to hit the queer object upon the surface of the water, the balls do no damage, glancing off harmlessly.

Not so with the dynamite gun on board the American boat. With each discharge there is the very dust to pay on shore. Now, it is a whole battery that is destroyed. Anon a shell drops in the town itself, and as a result houses are mowed down as if made of cardboard.

Retribution has come upon the pirates' nest, and while the chief rascal is away. He will, perhaps, be appalled when he returns to discover what havoc has been made in his quarters by the one vessel that sails under the American flag.

By the time noon arrives they have reduced the town to a mass of ruins. Alexandria never appeared one-half as bad after the bombardment by the English fleet.

No longer would these daring pirates skim the seas and gather tribute from all nations. One Yankee lad has demolished their power at a single stroke, and it must be years, if ever, before they again become dangerous.

Not yet does Tom Edison intend to leave this place. Ruin is all around them, and yet he will never be satisfied until he has met and conquered the wonderful boat invented by his Chinese rival. Besides, Master George has given him a hint as to where Kiang Ho of the Golden Belt keeps his rich treasure hidden, and he would like to have a shy at this before leaving the Chinese coast.

Again the maps are consulted and studied, especially in the direction they must go in order to reach the pirate's treasure vaults. Then the order is given and the Sea Spider moves away from the scene of her late engagement. She has not far to go, and a lookout keeps a bright watch for signs of the enemy that is to prove worthy of their metal.

CHAPTER IX.

SIX HUNDRED FATHOMS DOWN.

The young captain of the Sea Spider is naturally well pleased with the work done by his boat. The recent action has demonstrated that, in case of war a vessel built on something the same model as his own little craft, could create more consternation among the tremendous iron-clads of a power like Great Britain than even the Merri-mac did when she appeared among the wooden ships of the Federal Government in Hampton Roads.

Bent upon another mission, the strange craft moves through the water like a great sea monster gifted with life. George never tires of looking out of the bull's-eye window, and observing the peculiar denizens of the deep. Now, they seem to glare at him as if in defiance, but the gleam of the electric light causes them to shrink back in dismay. Nothing can stand before it. As the Sea Spider advances there is a continual retreat all along the line.

The young captain remains near his charts, and keeps his eye fastened upon them. He has a record of the vessel's speed at hand, and without moving from his chair can tell whether she goes ahead or backs, and at just what speed.

Thus he knows almost the minute when they should arrive at the ground where, according to the best of George's recollection, he saw the Chinese submarine vessel unload a cargo of spoils.

A strange place to hide silver and gold, and yet where could it be safer than at the bottom of the sea, fully six hundred fathoms down?

Certainly no ordinary mortal could reach it here, and Kiang Ho is himself the captain of the only diving vessel known in these parts.

"Keep a bright lookout, my friend, for the marks you spoke of," says the skipper to his guest, meanwhile ringing the bell to sink the vessel still more until she crawls along the bottom, and at the same time reduces her speed.

Several times Master George thinks he has discovered the "land marks" that indicate the presence of the treasure trove—a sunken ship imbedded in the mud—but on each occasion it proves to be something else.

Still, they do not despair. Time is at their service, and they do not belong to the class to give up a thing easily.

The search is kept up, and the fact that they are apt to run across the terrible Sea Serpent of the Chinese pirate at any time lends especial interest to the case. Such an encounter they are ready to welcome eagerly, and, indeed, Tom Edison keeps his boat in constant readiness for a submarine battle, which cannot come too soon to suit his ideas.

They have luck on their side, or else the course of the boat has been kept up in a remarkably clever manner. At any rate, Master George finally cries out joyfully that he has sighted the sunken steamer. He recognizes her in a number of ways, and is sure he cannot be mistaken.

They pass on a little distance, and then the Sea Spider settles down to rest. The time has come for the party to start out right and left to cover the field and find the treasure, which, if discovered, will be gladly taken aboard, since it must be of enormous value.

Of course, diving suits are needed for this purpose, and they are on hand, all in readiness for immediate use. Half a dozen don them. Tom Edison, Jr., leads one party, while Master George assumes charge of another. When they pass out of the vessel in the usual way, by means of double doors, they separate, three going to the right and the others to the left. All carry arms for defense, and each party has a water compass by means of which they may avoid getting lost, or at least have some way of locating the vessel should such a piece of ill-luck come upon them.

The young skipper leads his party on, spread in a line some twenty feet apart. Fastened upon their helmets they each carry a small electric flash light, which is manipulated by a cord, so that at will the bearer can bring about darkness or send a broad stream of light ahead.

They search every foot of ground as they go, in order to make no mistake. In the middle walks the captain, who has other things to think about besides finding the treasure. Upon him devolves the safety of the party, and he must keep up a steady reckoning of their progress, besides watching his compass from time to time.

They have thus wandered on for, perhaps, half a mile when Tom Edison becomes conscious of a curious fact. It is growing light ahead. He hardly knows how to account for it, since they have certainly not been ascending any plane, and cannot be any nearer the surface of the sea.

Another thought flashes into his brain. Perhaps they have made a circle, bearing to the left as lost people generally do, and are now approaching once more their vessel, the Sea Spider.

This idea is dispelled almost as soon as conceived. The compass does not lie, and he knows his vessel remains behind him, quietly resting upon the bottom of the sea.

Besides, this light grows more powerful even while he remains stationary, which proves that the object from which it emanates advances. He knows that the tropical seas contain many monsters never before gazed upon by human eyes. Can this be some gigantic electric fish that moves around illuminating the caverns of the deep as it searches for food?

Tom Edison, Jr., realizes that there is danger in the air at least, and gives the signal agreed upon, which brings his two companions to his side. They have, of course, also noticed the strange light, and wonder what it means.

Under the directions of their astute leader the head lights are turned down, and crouching among some half imbedded timbers of a sunken junk they await the coming of the monster.

The light grows stronger until none of them can face it and hide their eyes until its intensity becomes less. Then with startled gaze they look upon the awful form gliding slowly by—a shape that must strike terror to the heart of the beholder. From the lips of the young skipper fall the words:

"The Sea Serpent."

CHAPTER X.

"MILLIONS IN IT."

He makes no mistake.

The yellow form that looms up before the three Yankees writhing and squirming as might a monster sea serpent while moving forward, is no other than the submarine vessel of the redoubtable Kiang Ho, the cruel man who has made his name infamous around the world.

Tom Edison, Jr., is deeply interested, and looks at this piece of wonderful mechanism with a far different feeling than do his companions. They see only an object of dread, while he marks a most ingenious copy of nature in her lowest form.

The vessel does not depend upon the sinuous motion alone to drive her forward. There are other means of propulsion, looking like great fins of wings that protrude from her sides. He estimates that her capacity for speed and quick evolutions must be very great, but at the same time feels a thrill of pride as he remembers his own vessel, which he will only too gladly match against any and all comers.

The Sea Serpent's yellow sides vanish from their view though for more than a minute they are able to trace her course by reason of the illumination she causes to appear in the water.

One thing the skipper notes with a little apprehension. Her course at present is oblique with that taken by themselves, but she may change it, and discover the Sea Spider. Fortunately he has given orders to keep the boat in readiness for immediate service, and can depend upon his officers.

At any rate, he no longer desires to continue the search.

or the pirate's treasure-trove. If the rival boat is in the vicinity it behooves him to have a care, and give battle first. Then to the victor belong the spoils.

They start to retrace their steps, and thanks to the careful manner in which the captain has noted their line of march, they finally sight the light of the waiting boat, which is soon entered.

The other party is before them, and has had even a more thrilling experience. It seems that ere going a fifth of a mile they came upon the treasure cave of Kiang Ho, a natural grotto in the rocks forming the bed of the sea at this point.

While examining the immense stores of gold and silver contained in this cavern, they were surprised to see a light approaching. At first they thought the Sea Spider must have followed, but George speedily discovered that this illumination was approaching from an entirely different quarter.

This gave them a glimmer of the truth, and they knew the grotto was no safe place for Yankee tars. Meanwhile the great light had become stationary at some distance, and they could see several lesser ones moving toward them, which they believed must be caused by small electric lamps fastened upon the weighted armor of the Chinese pirates.

Their first thought was flight, but George, being of a daring mind, conceived the idea of hiding in the midst of the treasure and watching what occurred.

Finding such places where they could stow themselves, underneath armor and all, they calmly awaited the passage of events, confident of their ability to defend themselves should it come to such a pass that discovery was inevitable.

Soon the pirates arrived, each bearing a burden of spoils to be added to the mass that already half-filled the treasure cave. The more Kiang Ho got the more he wanted. Possibly he had an ambition to be known as the wealthiest man on earth, and, judging from his stores, he bade fair to reach that enviable position ere long.

Fortune seemed kind to the concealed Yankees, and although several times it looked as though they were about to be discovered such a calamity was withheld. Finally, with the last load came a giant in arms, the redoubtable Kiang Ho himself.

Of course, there could be no conversation held under such circumstances, but the manner of the notorious pirate and his gestures told the hidden sailors that he was a despot, feared by his men more than the Evil One himself.

Finally they all went away, and George seized this opportunity to lead his men away. They reached the Sea Spider in safety, and reported that the strange vessel of the pirate king doubtless lay in the same position they had seen her last.

This news gives Tom Edison keen gratification. He vents a royal battle in the air. It is the opportunity he has longed for, and he wishes to make the most of it. Such a chance may not come again in a long while.

Orders are given, and immediately the Sea Spider is set in motion. Slowly she creeps along, her pace reduced to a minimum, because she shows no electric light in her bow. George has given the course as near as possible, and the man at the wheel—if such it can be called, for the electric boat is steered with a mere pressure of the finger—keeps a right lookout ahead.

They come in contact with more than one great monster of the deep. A sword-fish tries conclusions with the unknown, and has his weapon broken off short against her metal side. Then a tremendous leopard shark, feeling insulted because pushed out of the way, endeavors to give battle, but receives such a shock of electricity that places him *hors de combat*.

"I see a dim light ahead," announces Bob Blinkers, who handles the boat better than any sailor aboard, and is given full charge at such a time as this.

"Head for it!" replies the skipper, laconically.

His intentions are evident. Figuratively speaking, the flag of the Yankee submarine vessel is nailed to the mast, and her owner is determined to learn whether she is the superior of this odd yet terrible invention of the great

Kiang Ho, keenest of all Celestials, and better fitted to rule China than the emperor.

As they draw nearer the illumination, it becomes more and more evident that they have made no mistake regarding the source from which it emanates. Without a doubt the strange craft of the Chinese pirate still lingers in the vicinity of the treasure grotto, and the anticipated duel will soon be no longer a thing of the dim future.

"Steady, Bob," as they draw so near that the dim outlines of the weird serpent ship can be seen.

"Steady it is, sir," replies the old tar.

"Give her a salute of warning," says Tom Edison. The rival submarine boat lies there at his mercy, but the spirit of fairness within him forbids him from taking advantage of the opportunity.

CHAPTER XI.

A NAVAL ENGAGEMENT UNDER THE WAVES.

A singular combat is about to begin, the first in the line of submarine warfare ever recorded. It will not be the last, since man's ingenuity is advancing rapidly along the line of hitherto unexplored paths—under the sea and through the realms of space between the heavens and the earth he is bound to make his conquering presence felt.

The oddest of all odd vessels lies there in plain sight of the young Yankee inventor, and he experiences a strong desire to see the inside workings of Kiang Ho's Sea Serpent. She rests upon the bottom inert, as though lying in wait for her prey, or resting after a feast.

Sounds are more readily conveyed under the water than through the air, and as young Edison listens he can hear a peculiar throbbing that he is positive does not emanate from his own vessel. It arouses his curiosity more than ever, and he longs to discover the principle upon which the shrewd Chinaman has constructed this remarkable imitation of the sea serpent.

As the chance will hardly come to him while the Sea Serpent is in the hands of the enemy, it stands to reason that he must first reduce her to a state of inaction.

Hence his desire for battle.

Other reasons urge him on. He has a burning desire to crush the power of this cruel monster, who has for years preyed upon the commerce of the world, and avoided punishment.

Perhaps the great sea serpent seen in the Atlantic by reputable persons from time to time may have been his unique craft.

In obedience to his order a shot is fired from the electric water-gun forward, and the concussion as it strikes the mailed side of the rival boat is plainly heard. There is a lazy roll to the sleeping monster, which seems to be the full amount of the result.

Tom Edison, Jr., has thrown his gauntlet into the ring and calmly awaits the result, confident in the powers of his own craft. He manipulates the Sea Spider himself during the engagement, and has no fear as to the end.

That the concussion produced by the sphere of steel striking the side of the Sea Serpent has aroused those within is plainly evident. Her strong electric light flashes to and fro after the manner of the search light on board a modern man-o'-war, in the endeavor to locate the object which has given them such alarm.

It will be but a brief breathing spell, and then the expected discovery must come, after which the queer serpent and spider of the deep will proceed to, figuratively speaking, tear one another's throats.

Now, the strong flood of light reveals the Yankee torpedo-boat in all its grotesque design. No doubt those on board the other craft are intensely surprised and realize that the time has come when an outraged justice reaches out an avenging hand toward them.

Life enters into the monster, and, as young Edison turns his own flood of light upon his antagonist, he sees motion. The Sea Serpent appears to revolve, at first slowly, but with increasing power.

This amazes the Yankee. He grasps something of the truth, as he bursts out:

"Good heavens! it is the spiral principle this Chinaman has utilized. He is ahead of us all."

Great as was his desire to examine the dreaded Sea Serpent before, it now amounts to almost a frenzy, since he realizes what a giant stride has been made in ship building.

"Vot you gall de spiral principle, gapting?" asks Donnerblitz, standing near by.

"Try to drive a dull nail in the wall. Impossible; yet you can turn a screw to the head," replies the young skipper, quickly.

The German is quick to grasp the idea.

"Ah, you mean like a top spinning—as de serpent passes through de water. Dot boat keeps whirling around—Himmel! how can de pig-eyed Chinamens stand on dere heads? I should not like to serve on dot Sea Serpent."

"Nonsense! only the outer shell revolves. The inner one is as firm as a rock. See, they are ready for business now."

A deafening crash announces the arrival of a steel projectile upon the casing of the Spider, but as there is no particular part of her to offer resistance, no damage is done.

These two terrible monsters of the sea begin to circle around one another in a cautious manner, as though desiring to observe what weakness may be apparent. It is a wonderful sight, but only a few eyes can take it in, as every man of the Sea Spider's crew is at his post, obedient to the orders of the skipper, and ready to act instantly, for the safety of all may depend upon prompt work.

"Look out, sir!" cries Liston, suddenly.

Tom Edison, Jr., is not napping, and sees that the rival boat shoots forward. Probably her bow is armed with a ram, and it is expected to do fearful execution when coming in contact with any object in front.

With wonderful adroitness the Sea Spider darts to one side. Manipulated by one who thoroughly understands the principles upon which she has been built, she can move in any direction with the speed of thought.

The rival vessel passes by with tremendous force, wasting her power upon vacancy, and as she goes the old veteran Howler plants a ball against her side that makes her tremble from stem to stern, or, as might apply better in her case, from head to tail.

Again the two antagonists face each other, the strong electric lights looking like evil eyes, and illuminating a space between, until even the most minute object can be distinguished.

"Coonskin," calls the young inventor, and the veteran in buckskin bobs up beside him.

"Ware snakes, cap'n, I'm on deck," he cries.

"Tell the bos'n to plant a ball square in that light which I imagine is not protected like our own, and it will be worth a year's salary. You hear."

"He'll do it, you bet, cap'n, Howler will, an' here goes to set him up to the game. Watch results, sir."

CHAPTER XII.

TWO MONSTERS OF THE DEEP AT WAR.

Only too willing to watch results, the young captain waits. It is evident that the enemy has something on the tapis, and Tom Edison, Jr., prepares to meet it. Having made one miss, the Sea Serpent does not give up the idea of ramming her antagonist down. Again she shoots forward with incredible swiftness, darting from side to side as though determined to daze the pilot of the Spider, and thus prevent a repetition of the dodge that worked so well on the former occasion.

There are other tricks which the wonderful vessel is capable of performing, however, and in almost the wink of an eye, young Edison has her mounting upward, so that the rival boat, baffled a second time of its prey, rushes underneath with the fury of a demon.

Up to this time the engagement has been pretty much one sided. It is the Mongolian craft that has been doing most of the fighting, and the Yankee only acting on the defense.

By this time the skipper of the latter vessel has demon-

strated to his entire satisfaction that his wonder of the submarine world is capable of doing even more than ever claimed for her in the way of being an artful dodger. The enemy that overtakes this slippery customer when guard must be a keen one, indeed.

It has come time for the redoubtable Sea Spider to show her teeth. She was not built for dodging alone, and must engage to grapple with a foe. The one that has the longer reach will be most apt to prove victor in a case like this.

Again the two foes face one another. Now is the time for old Howler to show his hand. The monster of the Celestial seas appears to be sulking there, as though terribly put out, because unable to accomplish the ruin of her rival.

Perhaps Kiang Ho, the scheming rascal, is devising other ways whereby he can overcome his rival. The ingenuity that fashioned the Sea Serpent in all her wonderful ways must surely be equal to such an occasion. It may have some strange net to throw out and entangle the Yankee cruiser, so that she can no longer steer with accuracy, or some other equally dangerous method of accomplishing the destruction of an enemy.

Tom Edison, Jr., can be both bold and cautious. He has considerable respect for his rival inventor, and gives him all due credit for shrewdness.

It is certainly time the old gunner Howler was making his presence known. The skipper gives the signal to discharge the gun, as a better opportunity can hardly be secured, and there is constant danger that the enemy may attempt something new.

Hardly has he done so than a concussion is felt, which he knows proceeds from the terrible water-gun, which the bos'n has especial charge over.

At the moment his eyes are fixed upon the dazzling electric light that marks the bow of the Sea Serpent, a shout of approval bursts from his lips as it suddenly goes out. The well-aimed projectile sent by Howler, so fashioned so as to effect a rapid passage through water, has played havoc with the electrical apparatus of the Chinese ram, and she can no longer illumine the surrounding waters.

As the Yankee boat possesses this power still, she has great advantage over the other, and which may yet work to encompass the destruction of the already partially disabled Chinese craft.

Those on board the Sea Serpent can only see the glare of that strong search light, while the Americans are enabled to distinguish every foot of the enemy's craft, so that the advantage is plainly on their side, unless something entirely unexpected occurs, which young Edison is on watch for.

Nor can Kiang Ho manipulate his craft so as to avoid being in the glare of that light, since the Water Spider has already demonstrated her ability to move two feet to the serpent's one, when evolutions are in order. If the Celestial inventor still hopes to win the fight he must bring new arts to bear, since his tried ones have proven failures.

Tom Edison has struck his first blow, and he means to follow it up with vigor. This terror of the seas must be demolished, and commerce relieved of its most dreaded enemy, the craft that can overtake the fleetest steamer with ridiculous ease, and sink the strongest iron-clad in half an hour.

Already that well-delivered shot from Howler has crippled her resources. Her light has gone out, and the vessel no longer finds herself able to accomplish such rapid gyrations as before.

Nor does the Yankee weary of well doing. He has scotched the serpent, not killed it, and he now proceeds to follow up his advantage as a prize-fighter might follow up his first telling blow, raining in others until he knocks his antagonist out.

From his place of observation he can see that the ram is wallowing there on the bottom as if endeavoring to recover. Never was an enemy in a better position for destruction.

Tom Edison strikes a key, and responsive to his touch the grand triumph of his skill moves forward approaching the helpless serpent of the waves. The other seems to writhe and hiss just as a rattlesnake with a broken back might, when unable to strike.

Relentlessly the Sea Spider advances to the tail of the serpent. There seems to be something wrong with the steering apparatus of the Celestial boat, as she will not obey her helm. For that matter the shot that demolished her head-light has apparently brought havoc to her whole machinery, for she is unable to even attempt to avoid the enemy.

Now the Sea Spider reaches the stumpy tail of the ricken monster. It slashes and bangs against the fore part of the sturdy Yankee craft, but the latter is well armored and pays no heed to such vaporings. A great steel claw reaches out, relentless as fate. It clutches the rithing tail and crushes it as an egg in its awful grasp. The steering apparatus of the Sea Serpent is no more, since the claw designed for this purpose has demolished it. There can no longer be any doubt regarding the issue. Victory remains with the Yankee submarine boat.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SECRET OF THE SPIRAL MOTION.

Having thus accomplished the ruin of the rival vessel, the Sea Spider backs away from the helpless luck.

There can be no telling what the desperate Chinese within the defeated ship may do, and Tom Edison is alive in the emergency. If some terrible catastrophe is about to overtake the Sea Serpent, he does not care to have his own sized boat involved in it.

At a proper distance he calls a halt, and the victorious Yankee cruiser flattens out on the bottom of the sea like a great skate, motionless.

"Boarders, ahoy!" sounds through her interior.

The men are well drilled, and in a minute a dozen are donning their suits of armor, capable of resisting the enormous pressure of the water at this depth. Young Edison calls to George to follow the example, as he intends leading the men himself.

Having thoroughly disabled his foe, the Yankee skipper does not the man to leave his work half-finished. He means to demolish the Sea Serpent, and with this purpose in view carries along a number of bombs that will exert enough power to shatter her to atoms.

All is soon in readiness, and the little party sallies forth. The electric head-light shows them plainly the position of the disabled Chinese ram. She lies in the same place, and there seems to be no sign of life around her.

Cautiously they advance, ready to take advantage of any opening, and yet in no hurry, since the game is in their power.

Tom Edison is curious to inspect the interior of the vessel he has defeated, and when he has once looked upon its secrets, he will be content to give the finishing blow.

They reach the side of the monster. The next thing to be done is to find a means of entrance. Here George shows his hand, and proves himself a valuable acquisition to the company. He has passed in and out of the Chinese water ram many a time, and knows her secrets.

Under his guidance they pass along to a certain point where George places his head close to the side of the armored submarine vessel and listens. All seems well, since he does not hear any sounds that would indicate an occupancy.

"They have flown," he signals to the skipper.

"Open sesame," replies the latter, in the language which he has already taught his guest.

Hardly waiting for the signal, George manipulates the little screw-handle in the vessel's side. The result is immediately apparent. A section of the armored vessel opens up, revealing a compartment filled with water.

Into this they enter. It is arranged on the same principle as their own, and four can step into it at once. When George endeavors to set the pumps to work in order to empty the compartment of water, they do not respond. As there is nothing else to be done, he opens the door, and with the flood of water they enter the body of Kiang Ho's doomed ram.

Their head-lights show them something that gives them a momentary shock. Then it is over with. The rush of

water has had a salutary effect, since it instantly washes over a train of slow match that is sputtering like a fiery demon, within a few inches of a tremendous bomb that was intended to blow the deserted vessel to atoms.

They remove their helmets and look at each other.

"A narrow escape, sir," remarks George, quietly.

"We could never have reached that bomb to have prevented the explosion. Your allowing the water to enter here was the best thing you ever did," declares the skipper, warmly, while Donnerbitz and Coonskin bend over and make sure there is not a spark left to reach the bomb.

"They have deserted their craft," says George.

"Did they possess a smaller one?" asks the captain.

"Not that I know of, but the walking is good between here and the islands," remarks the other.

"I wish them joy," laughs Tom.

His attention is immediately taken up with what he sees around him. It is certainly enough to interest a mind devoted to inventions, for some of the Chinese genius' ideas are remarkably bright.

Tom Edison makes copious notes of the things the cunning Kiang Ho would have obliterated by means of the terrible bomb. Of course, the idea that gives him the most solid satisfaction is the principle upon which the submarine ram has been built, the rotary motion that allows her to slip through the water at the rate of over eighty knots an hour.

Just as he suspected it, is built upon the spiral principle. Just as a screw enters the wood or a modern rifle-ball is made to revolve in its career by means of the chamber of the gun being rifled.

All these points interest the wizard of the waves immensely, and he sees a chance to utilize them in conjunction with certain thoughts of his own. Time passes unheeded, until George finally taps him on the arm, and asks whether the men waiting outside may not grow weary.

"Ah! I had forgotten. What a pity it seems that we must destroy all these good works, but they will not be lost to the world while I live. Kiang Ho has builded better than he knows, and some day the people will forgive his sins on account of the great benefit he confers on the universe."

Turning to his second officer, he says:

"Are you ready, Mr. Donnerblitz?"

"Ve vos, sir."

"How long do we have to get away after you set the match?"

"As long as you like, mynherr," replies the Teuton, with a wave of the hand. He fairly worships the wonderful young inventor, whose fortunes he followed through the perilous time of air navigation.

"Give us ten minutes, then."

"It is done, mit von to spare," replies the officer.

"Coonskin, open the compartment door."

The four pass into the small room or closet, where water will be allowed to enter until the pressure is equalized, when the outer door can be opened.

"What is wrong?" asks the skipper by signs, as he sees George struggling with some obstinate thing.

"I am sorry to say a lurch of the vessel has clogged the door, so that I cannot open it. The same has occurred with the one opening into the vessel. We are shut in here, and already the ten minutes before the explosion occurs have half-expired."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE GOLD GROTTO.

George's voice does not utter these words, for he has his helmet on, but with his hands he makes quick signals that the others read with the readiness of those conversant with the deaf and dumb alphabet.

Captain Edison recognizes the gravity of their situation, but he shows no alarm. Bending forward he gives the structure one hasty glance that takes in a comprehensive view of the whole affair. Then, seizing hold of it, he gives a tremendous pull. His strength is much greater than that of the young fellow so lately near death's door in an open boat, and the door draws open.

Freedom lies before them, and as only four minutes remain before the catastrophe is expected to occur, it behooves them to make haste. As they pass out from the side of the stricken ram, their comrades are seen near by, and fall in with them.

All hurry on, and the skipper keeps track of the time consumed. He knows the tremendous power of his own bomb, and desires to prepare for it.

When it is almost time for the explosion to take place by signal he compels his men to throw themselves flat upon the bottom of the sea.

As for himself and George, hidden behind some rocks they bend their gaze upon the deserted sea monster, groveling in impotence and awaiting the touch of fate.

Hardly have they turned to look than the expected event occurs. A sudden commotion is noticed. The sides of the steel-plated Sea Serpent seem to bulge out, as though the pressure inside exceeds that of the sea without.

Then the whole vessel drops to pieces, like a card-house undermined. There is a mad swirl of the angry waters, so long defrauded of their prey, and in the vortex the watchers can see a confused jumble of timbers and metal scales.

They feel the shock distinctly, and would easily be knocked down had they chanced to be standing at the time. As it is they clutch the rocks in order to prevent themselves from being sucked in by the wild whirlpool of waters that rages near by, playing with the dismembered fragments of Kiang Ho's wonderful submarine ram.

Captain Tom turns his head to ascertain if all this commotion has had any particular effect upon his own craft, but beyond her rising and falling as if in a tide way, he can discover none.

His mission to the China sea has now been pretty well accomplished, although several minor things remain to be done, ere he heads his wonderful racer once more for American ports.

He feels that a duty compels him to secure the enormous booty of the pirates, now that he is so very close to it, and the chances favorable. It would be a shame to deprive the world of so much gold through any qualms of conscience.

True, this treasure has been wrung from murdered merchants, and is blood bought. The more reason it should not be left in the hands of the terrible Kiang Ho, to be utilized in building new terrors of the deep and keeping up his trade.

Thus Tom Edison reasons, and his excuse for utilizing the treasure is sound. Who can blame him? Gold is only good when it can be made to serve a proper purpose, and in the hands of one who works for the public, such as this inventor, it is attaining its highest end.

They return to the Sea Spider and enter. A short season of rest will be beneficial, ere they attempt to load up with the pirate's store.

Meanwhile the vessel covers her recent course, and comes to rest close to the grotto where the great heaps of treasure lie. Preparations are made for taking it aboard. There is a hold forward, now filled with water, which the treasure will displace, so that the whole can be dumped in without the toilers of the deep being compelled to pass in and out of the cruiser. This is fortunate, and at the same time saves any waste of minutes.

"Again we sally forth, my friends," remarks the skipper, getting his helmet, with its clever reservoir of compressed air, in readiness.

"Of course, you go armed?" asks George.

There is something like anxiety in his voice, and the dashing skipper surveys him with peculiar interest, and then laughs.

"What do you fear, my friend? Surely that treasure is not apt to fly at us?" he says.

"No, but those who gathered it year after year are not apt to desert it now. They will sell their lives first. I happen to know Kiang Ho."

"Ah! you have an idea they may still be in hiding about here, and have not started to walk to their island retreat—that this fellow may have hopes of yet avenging his late disaster?"

"Why not? You would be apt to do the same thing. Deprived of his own vessel, he cherishes a hope that he may overpower you while at work: that your eagerness to load up with the treasure may unbalance your mind, and

cause you to grow careless, when he can sneak inside the Sea Spider and recoup his disasters."

Captain Tom whistles.

"We'll arrange all that. I'm glad you spoke of it, George. If the rascal tries such a game, we'll manage to trip him up."

So saying, he sees to it personally that enough men go out to guard those who toil, and leaves orders with Liston, in charge of the boat to be constantly on his guard.

All are now in readiness for business, and sally forth. The grotto is close at hand, and its immediate vicinity is brightly lighted up by the flood of electricity that comes from the vessel. Besides, every man wears a small incandescent lamp upon the front of his helmet, so that there may be no darkness where they roam.

Business is begun. In various ways the golden stream is diverted to the forward hold of the Yankee cruiser, and gradually what the grotto held is being transported to the vessel that will restore to the world this precious metal stolen from its proper channels.

As yet nothing suspicious has been seen or heard, and it begins to appear as though the fears of George were without foundation. It is not the policy of the young captain to be caught napping, however, and he does not relax his watchfulness in any degree; which proves him to possess an exceedingly level head.

CHAPTER XV.

YANKEE GRIT.

The blow falls suddenly, after all. It is just as George has suspected. The Mongolian pirate inventor, while abandoning his useless vessel has not given up the fight by any means. He is a "sticker" in the true sense.

Hovering around the treasure grotto with his crew, he has seen all that goes on, and doubtless awaits but a fitting moment to stake his all in a determined attempt to avenge his late defeat.

The first Tom Edison learns of his presence is when one of his men is discovered engaged in a desperate hand-to-hand combat with a giant who wears a peculiar suit of armor, with a golden belt around it, the emblem of Kiang Ho.

Others are seen rushing forward to overwhelm the little band. Their ferocious manner shows itself in actions, and doubtless, under more favorable circumstances, they would likely indulge in fierce war-cries.

Their leader is a man of enormous height, and must be the notorious Kiang Ho himself, a fact that Tom Edison notes with pleasure, since he has longed for the opportunity to rid the world of this merciless monster, for years the bane of commerce.

The Yankee tars are on the alert, and recognize their danger. Having their orders, they rally at the point where their captain stands, and await the attack.

Although his antagonist is larger than himself, the assaulted sailor makes a good showing, and keeps the Celestial from gaining an advantage.

Their movements are naturally clumsy, encumbered as the men are with their armor, and it is really ridiculous to see how they struggle, and with what apparently slow actions they seek to down each other.

That this is tragedy and not comedy is soon made evident, for the advancing leader of the crew belonging to the destroyed Sea Serpent, upon nearing the struggling men, raises something he carries in his hands and takes aim.

No report is heard, but the brave Yankee tar reels and falls. He has been stricken by a bolt from some devilish contrivance in the shape of a gun. Young Edison sees that the Chinese navigator of the ocean depths is not far behind him in devices for taking human life. If the men behind are also armed with the same kind of weapons, it will go hard with the Americans.

The captain is on deck, and knows what he is about. Time is of immense value to him now, and he advances to meet the giant pirate. There can be no sword combat between the rival leaders under such conditions as these.

The fact of their being clad in armor and surrounded by water that makes every movement a labored one, prevents that.

Other weapons take the place of swords. Tom Edison holds in his hands something that he believes can do better work than the weapon Kiang Ho used upon the sailor.

He sights it and presses the button. At the same moment the Chinese leader is bringing his own electrical water-gun up to his shoulder with the intention of downing the audacious Yankee who has entered the realm of which he has long been king and wrested his powers away.

As Edison fires, the Celestial giant is seen to stagger backward. He does not fall, but the weapon drops from his nerveless hands, as though it has received the full benefit of the discharge. For the moment he is defenseless. The skipper of the Sea Spider gives a signal to his men, who immediately rush upon the crew of the demolished ram.

For a short time the scene is one to arouse the enthusiasm of a looker-on fond of battle, and it may be set down as certain that such a combat has up to this time never been placed upon the annals of history, though ere long the air and sea will be as familiar scenes for travel and adventure as the earth's surface is now. It is only a question of time. Our Edisons are making great progress in finding out the hidden powers of nature and utilizing them.

Shots are exchanged between the rival forces, and it seems like only a question of superior arms, in order to settle the matter. In this particular the Americans have the advantage, as their guns are better adapted for speed at the distance now separating the hostile forces.

Men go down as though struck by an invisible power. If a bolt of lightning had the power to pierce the waves to this depth, and strike human beings low, it could not accomplish its work in a more terrible manner.

It may be noticed that these men who fall are, for the most part, the followers of Kiang Ho. What the reason of this may be is not easily apparent. Perhaps the armor of the Mongolian tribe is rather defective, or else the weapons that have been invented by the Yankee lad shoot more powerfully. At any rate, the assailants get the worst of the fight.

They show signs of demoralization, which is given in sundry ways. When a man begins to look over his shoulder you have him as good as whipped. All that remains is to keep up the good work, and the end is certain.

Tom Edison is in the thick of the fight, and his example spurs his men on. They realize that it is only right and fair they should be where their leader goes, and thus the whole party plunge into the midst of the enemy.

Their weapons seem inexhaustible also, and the Chinese recoil from the death that stares them in the face. One more grand rush and they are routed. The Yankee skipper sees this. Again he waves his men on, leading himself. He runs across Kiang Ho, and the infuriated giant closes with him. There is danger that in the scuffle some part of Tom's armor may become displaced, and such a catastrophe must result in immediate death, as the water would by its pressure annihilate him.

Donnerblitz sees his peril.

He springs to the relief of his beloved leader. Ere he has arrived within five feet of the place, the little engagement has come to an end without his help.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE LAST OF THE WATER RAM'S CREW.

The Chinese giant has laid hold of the young captain of the Sea Spider, but in doing so he assumes a responsibility he cannot maintain. The wizard of the deep has undreamed of facilities for working his will, even when taken at what appears to be a disadvantage.

He does not worry over the case, but gives the giant time to get his hands firmly clasped upon his armor, when he diverts the electric current from the lamp in his helmet to a course that sends it through the frame of the other.

It is not strong enough to kill, but causes Kiang Ho, dealer in all manner of weird and wicked devices, to fall back in consternation. He has apparently no further desire to keep up the battle, since it seems impossible to kill this wonder-maker from Yankee land. Escape will suit the Celestial for the present. A man values his life, after all, more than treasure, no matter what the amount may be, and when it comes down to a choice, few there are who decide in favor of the dross, for what would it be worth to him without life?

This being the case the giant turns to fly.

He forgets that he is Kiang Ho, the Great, who has never yet suffered defeat at the hands of any mortal being. Just now any little mongrel cur might run out and snap at his heels with impunity, for his soul has become dwarfed.

Those of his followers who are left, seeing their hitherto unterrified leader thus making tracks, become utterly demoralized themselves, and proceed to each man look out for himself.

It does not suit the purpose of the Yankee skipper to have his rival in the line of electric invention get away. Though his vessel is no more, doubtless the astute Kiang Ho carries her model in his brain, and he will find a chance to build one that will be an improvement over the old.

The commerce of the civilized world demands that Kiang Ho be disposed of, and Tom Edison, Jr., would never feel that he had fully discharged his obligations to society until he had laid the piratical giant among the dead of the deep sea.

This being the case, he signals his men to give chase, and himself rushes after his intended victim, without waiting to see whether his followers have understood his wishes.

It proves dangerous work for young Edison. The lamp upon his helmet, gives no light as it became disarranged at the time he manipulated it, in order to give the other a shock. As he draws further away from the Sea Spider in the ardor of his pursuit, the illumination becomes more and more feeble, until it is only on account of his gradually overtaking the fugitive that he is able to see him at all.

One last supreme effort brings him up to the giant, who, realizing the desperate condition of his case, whirls around to meet his enemy.

At the same time he gives some sort of signal that calls his companions around. Those who have been able to leave the field of battle and accompany him in his flight have stuck close to his side, understanding that to be separated from this man means annihilation, as they can never reach the shore where safety lies.

Almost before he knows it, the Yankee skipper finds himself surrounded by over half a dozen of the Chinese pirates. They are desperate fellows, and placing their recent misfortunes where they belong, upon the head of this man, it enters their heads to desire his destruction.

Really the position of Tom Edison becomes serious, indeed, and he realizes it when on all sides he sees dark threatening forms around him. One hope remains—a single light advances from the direction of the recent engagement, as though a friend more faithful than the rest has not deserted him.

Something within tells him it is George, for he feels that this friend has watched his career in the recent engagement with more than a zealous eye.

His antagonists seem to understand the whole case, and are determined to meet the emergency. They will overwhelm him before the others have a chance to arrive on the scene.

There is a second side to this matter, and Tom Edison himself has to be consulted ere he will allow these fellows a victory over him. He uses his gun, and one Mongolian drops to the bottom as though stricken with paralysis.

This seems to be an easy matter. All there is to be done is to point the weapon and pull the trigger when a result is obtained. A second of the infuriated pirates goes down, when the young inventor turns his magic wand upon him, and this leaves but three.

At this moment, however, Tom Edison discovers that his electric water-gun will no longer discharge its func-

tions. It has either exhausted its resources, or else some accident has befallen it.

This leaves him practically defenseless, with a trio of desperate rascals pushing upon him.

Retreat—it is open to him, since the fall of the last man has left a blank space in the circle. Tom Edison may fall back, but he will never turn and run, not being built that way.

The missiles of the enemy rain against his armor, but fail to pierce it, thanks to the manner in which it has been made. They keep up their fusillade while advancing, as though hoping to find some weak place where a lucky shot may at least disable him.

All the while Tom steadily falls back. He cannot take his gaze from his foes, but knows through a sense of intuition that the friend at his back is advancing as rapidly as he can make progress through the water.

Already the gleam of the little light is seen, and Captain Tom is much encouraged.

His enemies will not desert him, since they have apparently resolved to conquer or perish together, so the affair rapidly narrows down to a conclusion. The light is now strong enough to reveal every movement of the foes, and he wonders whether after all he may not have made a mistake, and the advancing person be another enemy. It is too late to remedy the matter now. A hand clasps his arm, and Tom Edison feels a new weapon placed within his grasp. It is George who has arrived.

CHAPTER XVII.

CONCLUSION.

This now alters the complexion of affairs, and the skipper of the Sea Spider has the game in his hands, so far as appearances go. He points the gun, and his foes are again reduced in number by one.

Kiang Ho realizes his case is desperate, and throws himself upon the Yankee captain. His immense size enables him to bear Tom down to the ground. He clutches at his antagonist as if endeavoring to tear away the armored helmet, and thus effect the destruction of the other, for without such a protection it is not possible to live a second so many hundred fathoms down under the surface of the sea, such is the pressure.

George bravely comes to the rescue. Though apparently no fighter, he is at least equal to such an occasion as this. During the struggle between the two leaders of the rival submarine ships, the electric gun has fallen from Tom's hands.

This George eagerly seizes. He shudders and hesitates, never having taken human life. The face of the huge Chinese pirate is turned toward him, and he can see the glaring eyes full of hate and revenge. It is Tom's life that is in peril. George hesitates no longer, but fires.

The giant Chinaman releases his hold upon the Yankee skipper and falls back, to rise no more. His helmet has not saved him from the terrific force of the missile that comes from the water-gun.

Tom Edison is on his feet again, none the worse for his recent experience. He grasps the hand of his friend warmly, and in action expresses his thanks.

To his surprise the other seems faint, as though something has given him a shock, and Tom is compelled to support him to the ship.

Once they are inside the Sea Spider and the armor removed, Tom finds his companion very white. He surveys him in surprise, goes out and gives orders to Donnerblitz, who waits in an ante-room and returns to his friend. To find George in tears amazes him, but quick to guess the truth he takes his friend's hand.

"Fear not—I have learned your secret—this last act has revealed it to me. You are my cousin, Georgie Edison, to discover whom it was one of my missions to the China coast. Am I right?"

The girl, who has kept her secret so long, bows her head and smiles through her tears.

"Yes. I know I betrayed myself when that emergency came upon me. I hated to do it, but he would have mur-

dered you, Tom. Ugh! I shall see those fearful eyes as long as I live."

"I hope not. At any rate, I owe my life to you. Tell me how you happened to be castaway on this coast?"

"You know my father was a consul. At his death I had a great desire to go home, and wrote you about it. Upon starting I believed I would be safer if I disguised myself as a boy, so I cut my hair off, armed myself, and started. The last ship we were on was finally burned, and—you know the rest."

"This faithful old sailor Walters knew your secret?"

"Yes, and I owe him much. He has been a friend to me on many occasions. One favor I beg, Tom."

"Granted, already."

"Keep my secret. While on this cruise let me be George to you and all. I wish it."

"It shall be as you desire, and as our tastes, singularly enough, run in the same groove, I anticipate pleasant companionship. You shall be George to me, my friend and fellow-student."

As the mission of the Sea Spider has been wholly accomplished, there is no further reason why she should remain in the Oriental sea. When the last of the pirate's vast treasure is placed aboard, they leave the scene of Kiang Ho's defeat and death, and start upon their long cruise across the Pacific, heading for San Francisco.

A vessel that can make three miles while the dearest Atlantic liner makes one need only take a few days in crossing from Hong Kong to California, and in a wonderfully short space of time the Sea Spider nears the shore of the Golden State.

Other work calls for the attention of the young Yankee inventor. This deep sea cruiser is not his only triumph, but he hastens east to his workshop, left in charge of capable assistants, to complete more than one great idea, which will astonish the scientific world.

Georgie accompanies him, for she is as deeply interested as himself in all his work. To Tom Edison, Jr., she seems a sister, and yet he feels toward her as he might toward a school chum.

Here, with the end of the Sea Spider's cruise, we will leave the ingenious wizard, confident that his next work will even surpass the submarine vessel's abilities, for he aims high.

[THE END.]

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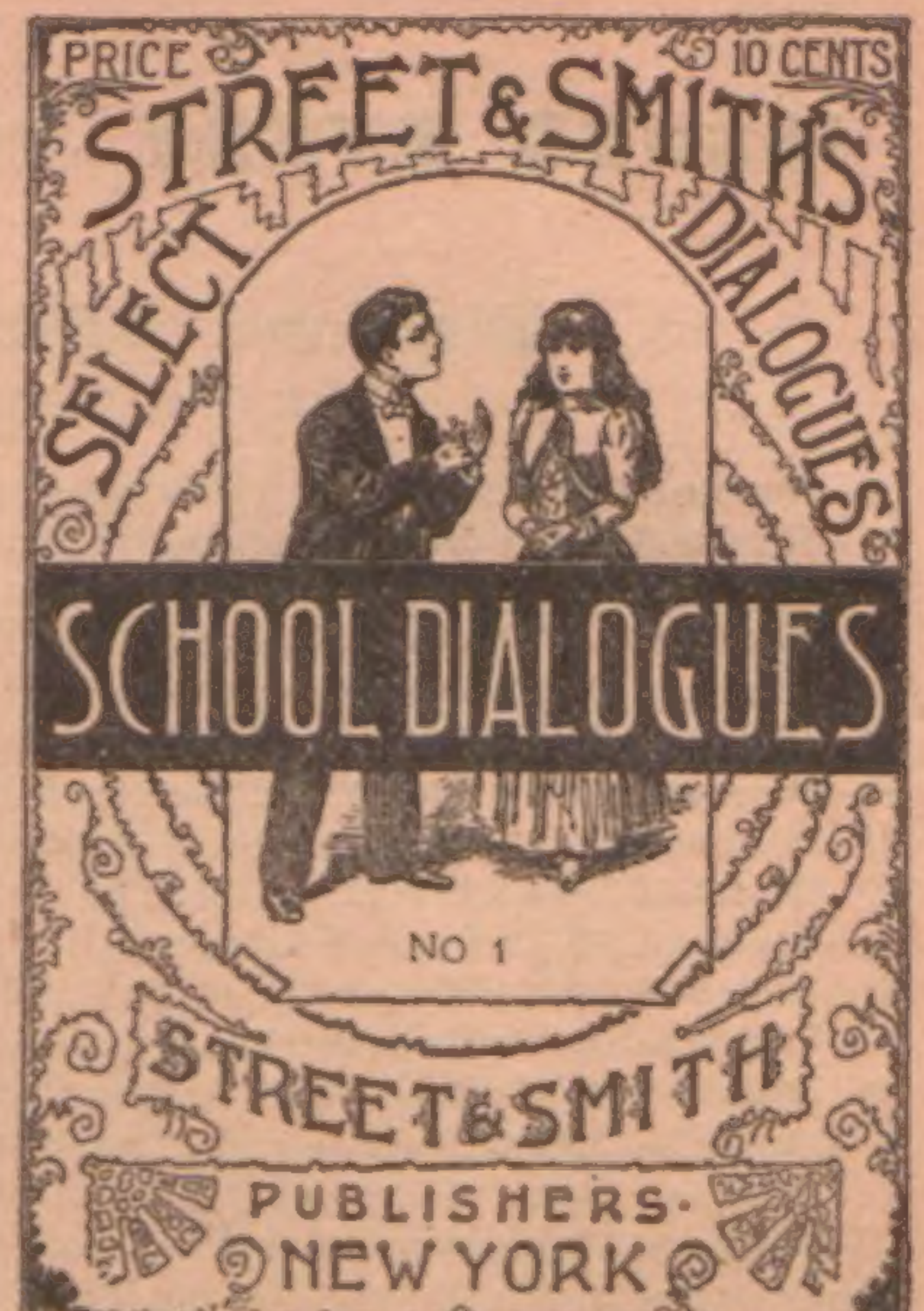
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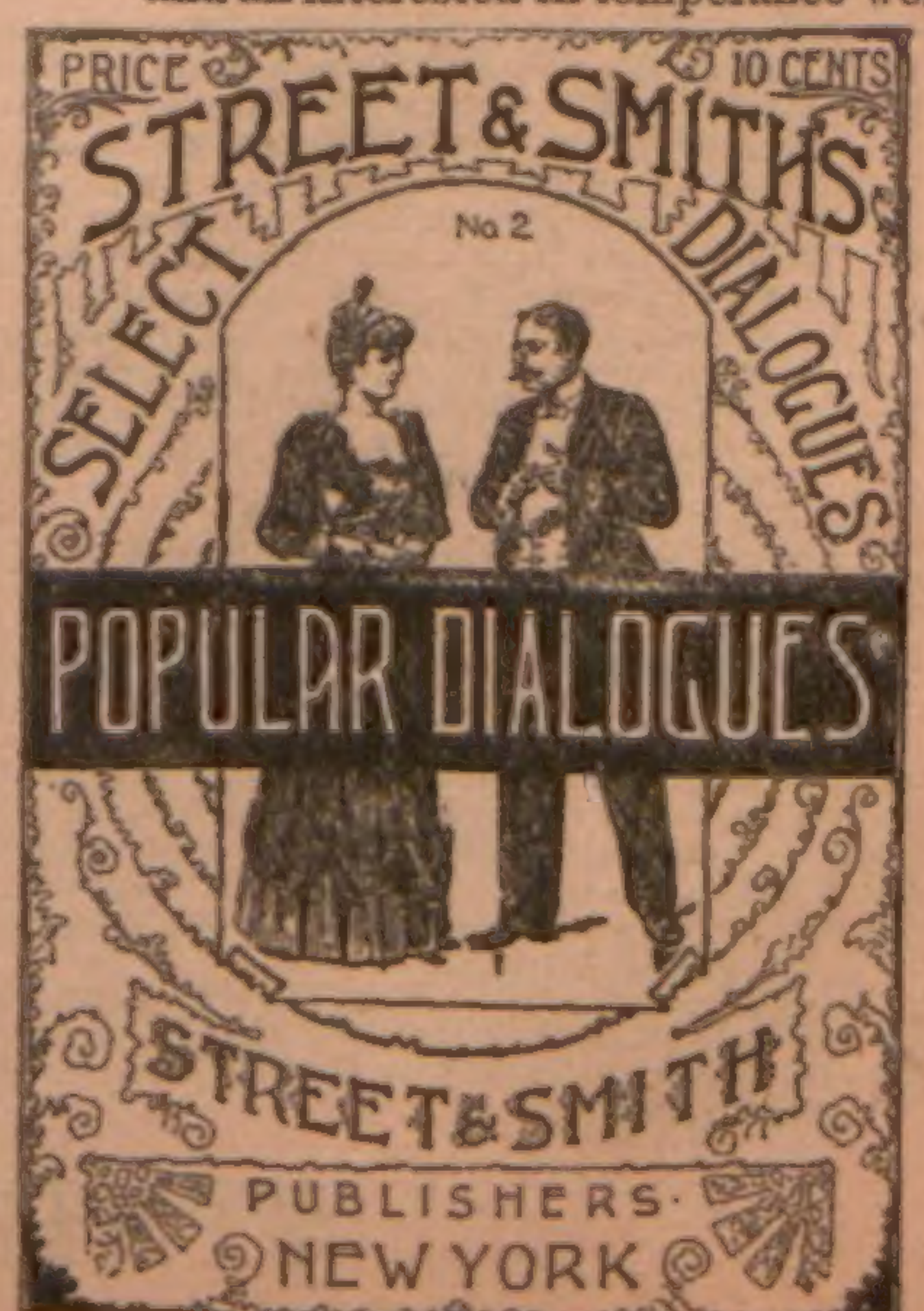
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